

What's next?

- Develop a draft State Rail Plan 2020
- Develop a System-Plan Environmental Evaluation (SEE). The SEE will examine the base case and preferred option and their potential impacts.
- Feedback on draft plan
 - August 6th video-conference
 - public meetings
 - focus groups
 - 45-day comment period
- Incorporate comments into final State Rail Plan

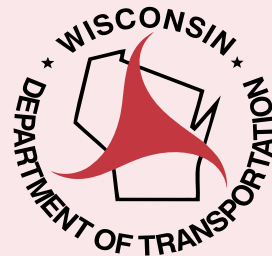
For more information on the State Rail Plan or to provide us with comments, please contact:

Al Stanek
WisDOT Bureau of Planning
P.O. Box 7913

Madison, WI 53707-7913

Telephone: (608) 266-1681
Fax: (608) 267-0294

E-mail: albert.stanek@dot.state.wi.us



Wisconsin Department of Transportation
Bureau of Planning
P.O. Box 7913
Madison, WI 53707-7913

***Do we have your correct mailing address?
If not, please let us know.***



Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT)

July 2002

State Rail Plan video conference set for Aug. 6 *(see page 2)*

Rail's economic importance

Freight rail service provides many Wisconsin businesses with another transportation option that helps keep shipping rates competitive. Wisconsin businesses use rail to transport essential materials such as minerals, grain, pulp and paper, lumber, coal, plastic pellets, fertilizers, steel, scrap metal, motor vehicles and parts, chemicals, heavy machinery, and glass. In 2000, Wisconsin's freight railroads moved 149 million tons of materials valued at over \$4 billion. According to the American Association of Railroads, railroads moved 40% of the nation's intercity freight in 2001.

Efficiency is perhaps the greatest advantage to using rail. According to The American Association of Railroads, a typical train can haul the equivalent of 280 trucks, using only 1/3 the energy. By providing an efficient and cost-effective means of moving raw materials and finished products, rail can help make Wisconsin businesses more competitive.

Intermodal, using two or more transportation modes to move freight, is the fastest growing segment of the rail industry, tripling in volume over the past 20 years. Intermodal takes advantage of each transportation mode's strengths. For example, it can utilize the long-haul efficiency of rail and the flexibility of local truck delivery. In Wisconsin, rail-truck intermodal facilities exist in Milwaukee, Green Bay, Neenah, and Arcadia. Rail-marine intermodal facilities exist at a number of Wisconsin ports.

Rail is an important industry on its own, with infrastructure and rolling stock worth billions. Also, the rail industry paid \$214 million in wages in 2000 to 4,023 employees living in Wisconsin. Railroad employees are among Wisconsin's most highly compensated workers (53,000 average income in 2000).

At right, a toploader, moves a container at the Port of Milwaukee.

This newsletter:

- Lists statewide video conference locations and times
- Identifies rail issues
- Describes rail's economic importance
- Describes rail safety
- Provides contact information



Photo: Erich Schmidtke, WisDOT Staff



SRP Video Conference

Tuesday, August 6, 2002

3:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m. & 6:00 p.m. – 7:30 p.m.

To accomodate as many people as possible, similarly-structured afternoon and evening sessions are planned.

City	Conference location
Madison	UW-Extension– Pyle Center 702 Langdon St.
Eau Claire	State Office Building 718 W. Clairemont Ave., Rm. 139
Green Bay	Green Bay State Office Building 200 N. Jefferson St., Rm. 618
La Crosse	La Crosse State Office Building 3550 Mormon Coulee Rd., Rm. B29
Milwaukee	UW-Milwaukee School of Business 3202 N. Maryland Ave.
Oshkosh	CESA 6 2300 State Highway 44
Rhineland	DNR Regional Headquarters 107 Sutliff Ave.
Superior	UW-Superior– Rothwell Student Center 1600 Catlin Ave.
Waukesha	WisDOT District 2 Offices 141 NW Barstow St., Rm. 127
Wisconsin Rapids	State Office Building 1681 2 nd Ave. South, Rm. 120

State Rail Plan issues

Unlike the state’s highway system, all but a small percentage of Wisconsin’s rail infrastructure is privately owned. *Because of this fact*, SRP 2020 Advisory Committee members have recommended a primarily policy-oriented approach for the rail plan. This approach involves analyzing a discreet set of policy issues and options leading to the development of recommended new state policies for passenger rail, freight rail and roadway-railway crossing safety.

A publicly-generated list that initially contained over 60 issues was analyzed in an attempt to produce a manageable number of issue statements. WisDOT transportation planners prepared comprehensive issue review papers, arranged presentations on key issues by national rail experts, and coordinated the development of databases and other tools to analyze issues and options.

In April, our advisory committee reviewed the potential passenger rail and roadway-railway crossing issues. Last month the committee reviewed potential freight rail issues. The following issues have been selected to be a part of the initial policy framework for the *SRP 2020*:

- As we look out to 2020, what level of Wisconsin intercity passenger rail service is appropriate and how will it be coordinated with freight rail operations?
- What are the options for providing passenger rail service to Green Bay and the Fox River Valley and which one makes the most sense?
- What are the options for providing passenger rail service to the Eau Claire-Chippewa Valley area and which one makes the most sense?
- Is a Janesville routing alternative viable?
- What combination of engineering, education and enforcement actions will most efficiently produce the maximum reduction in roadway/railway crossing crashes?
- What can the state do to help reduce trespassing on private railroad rights-of-way?
- Can the state do anything to help relieve the significant Chicago area freight congestion that impacts Wisconsin railroad service?
- What can be done to improve rail HAZMAT transport safety?
- Should Wisconsin’s publicly owned rail lines be improved, and if so, to what standards?
- What should be the state policy on acquiring future rail corridors targeted for abandonment?
- What is the appropriate state role regarding intermodal freight facilities?
- Are there appropriate state tax and regulatory changes that would benefit Wisconsin shippers and encourage state rail infrastructure improvements?

Focus groups are currently being conducted around the state to test the public reaction to the above issues and the options that are under consideration to address them. Statewide videoconferences to solicit additional feedback will be held on August 6th (see article at left for exact times and locations). If you cannot attend on August 6th, you are encouraged to submit written comments by August 20th.

Revisions will be made based on public reactions this summer and fall. After all issues and options are identified and developed WisDOT planners will be compiling an initial *Draft State Rail Plan 2020* that will be widely distributed for review.

It’s a dynamic process and you are an important part of it!



Congratulations to Wisconsin & Southern Railroad Company for being named 2001 Regional Railroad of the Year by Railway Age Magazine.



Three E’s

The State Rail Plan will focus on the three E’s to improve crossing safety at roadway-railway crossings. The three E’s are engineering, education, and enforcement.

Engineering

Includes such things as active warning devices, improved lighting and sight-angles, grade separation, consolidation of some at-grade crossings, and the use of reflective materials on trains and at crossings.

Education

Includes programs to educate people about rail safety. An example is WisDOT’s Operation Lifesaver program.

Enforcement

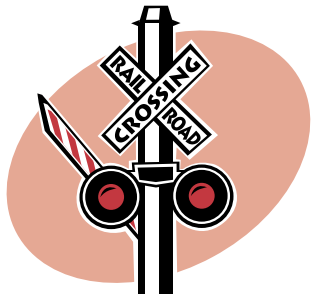
Enforcement is critical to safety to ensure that motorists do not maneuver around closed gates or attempt to “beat the train.” This can include target enforcement areas, cameras, putting police officers on trains, and education programs for judges and police officers.

The State Rail Plan will highlight rail safety, particularly safety at roadway/railway crossings. Wisconsin has a relatively good rail safety record. In 1999, roadway/railway crashes accounted for less than 1% of all police reported crashes in the state. Wisconsin also had the lowest fatality-to-crash rate of any of the Midwest states. But safety can, and must, be even better, especially if passenger and freight rail are to have expanded roles in Wisconsin’s transportation system.

The Federal Railroad Administration oversees rail safety at the federal level. At the state level, WisDOT and the Office of the Commissioner of Railroads (OCR) share responsibility. OCR is responsible for investigating crossings and ordering any necessary safety improvements. WisDOT is responsible for funding rail safety improvements, ensuring that appropriate design standards are met, and coordinating traffic signals with oncoming trains. WisDOT also sponsors the Wisconsin chapter of Operation Lifesaver. (see article at bottom of page)

Crossings

Highway-rail crossings are where one or more railroad tracks cross a highway, road, street, sidewalk, pathway, or private drive. About 90% of Wisconsin’s highway-rail crossings are at-grade. The remaining are grade-separated overpasses or underpasses.



There are two basic types of crossing warning devices for at-grade crossings:

Passive: Traffic control devices that *do not* give positive notice to highway users of the approach of a train. These devices include cross-bucks, stop signs, yield signs, pavement markings, and constantly flashing lights.

Active: Traffic control devices that give positive notice to highway users of the approach of a train. These devices include flashing lights, bells, horns, activation of nearby traffic signals, message boards, gates and other physical barriers.

Active devices offer greater protection than passive devices. However, about 75% of Wisconsin’s at-grade crossings have only passive warning devices.

Type of Crossing	Passive	Active	Total
Number	5,194	1,792	6,986

Source: WisDOT (2001)

Operation Lifesaver, Inc.

Operation Lifesaver, Inc. is a nationwide, nonprofit organization created in 1972 to improve safety at highway-rail crossings and on railroad rights-of-way. Operation Lifesaver, Inc. produces rail safety television and radio announcements and educational materials (e.g., brochures, fact sheets, videos, coloring books) for all ages and audiences regarding rail safety.

Wisconsin Operation Lifesaver, Inc. is affiliated with the national Operation Lifesaver program, and is sponsored and coordinated by WisDOT. Numerous groups and individuals also volunteer their time. During 2001, 522 presentations were made to 12,225 people throughout the state, including students, school bus drivers, law enforcement personnel, emergency responders, and senior citizens. Additionally, Wisconsin Operation Lifesaver, Inc.’s participation at numerous conferences, fairs, and meetings throughout the state has reached another 22,000 people.

More information about Operation Lifesaver is available at: <http://www.oli.org/>

State Rail Plan Web Page

WisDOT has developed a Web page that provides information on the State Rail Plan and on past and future plan meetings and activities. It also gives contact numbers and addresses and provides links to other rail sites.

www.dot.state.wi.us/dtim/bop/rail-srp.htm